

Proposed Measure 34-296: Washington County Public Safety Levy 2020

Washington County voters will be asked to consider two, five-year local option levies on the ballot this May: a proposed renewal of the Library Levy and a proposed Public Safety Levy. If passed, Measure 34-296 would replace the five-year Public Safety Levy that will expire in June 2021.

Washington County provides public safety services to all cities, urban unincorporated neighborhoods and rural communities in Washington County. These services include prosecution, jail and other incarceration services, probation and parole supervision, juvenile crime prevention, special law enforcement teams and other law enforcement services, such as forensics and investigations.

The current, expiring Public Safety Levy has provided funding for 16% of these services for all Washington County residents. The proposed levy, if passed, would continue to provide 16% of the funding for the County's public safety services and would run from July 2021 to June 2026. The proposed levy would provide funding under two categories:

- Continue the current level of services based on population growth, inflation, equipment costs and other expenses associated with forecasted growth. These services include:
 - Countywide prosecution services,
 - Compliance monitoring for registered sex offenders,
 - Supervision and treatment of juvenile offenders,
 - Victims' assistance and emergency shelter for women and children who are victims of domestic violence,
 - Special law enforcement teams such as mental health response teams of deputies and mental health professionals helping people in crisis get medical assistance instead of going to jail.
- Provide additional funding for staff and services which would include:
 - An additional prosecutor to address an increase in child abuse cases,
 - Four additional probation officers to supervise an increase in domestic violence offender caseload,
 - Four additional jail deputies allowing the jail to operate at full capacity and reduce early release,
 - Contracted services to divert eligible, non-violent juvenile offenders to community-based intervention programs.

The levy would, if passed, have a five-year, fixed rate \$0.47 per \$1,000 of assessed value, which would be an increase of \$0.05 per \$1,000. If approved, this would be the first rate-increase since the original levy in 2000. In 2021, typical homeowners with an assessed value (not market value) of \$300,000 would pay \$141, or about \$20 more than they paid in 2020.

If the levy does not pass, there would be a reduction in services in Washington County affecting prosecution, law enforcement, supervision, corrections and emergency shelters likely to begin in 2021. In 2021, the tax would not go into effect and typical homeowners, based on an average assessed value of \$300,000, would see a \$126 per year reduction in their property taxes.

For additional information about Measure 34-296—the Washington County Public Safety Levy—please visit www.co.washington.or.us/levies or call 503-846-8685.